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To

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OF

Denford in Berkshire.

LETTER II.

*On Sir Francis Burdett's motion; and on
Corruption's new source of consolation.*

North Hampstead, Long Island, 10 Oct. 1817.

MY DEAR SIR,

This day twelve month at Mr. HUNT'S, at Middleton, I wrote, while my worthy friend HINXMAN was gone to Appleshaw fair, the *first* of those Essays, at the end of the *fifteenth* of which the Borough-mongers were brought to a state of desperation. In dating my letter the circumstance recurred to my mind; and I cannot help reflecting with uncommon satisfaction on the proofs, which the last year has given, of the irresistible power of the charms of truth, when she is dressed in a simple garb, and fairly and fully presented to the eyes of the world. During the year 1817, which is now fast closing upon us, have been sown the seeds of the regeneration of England, which, by a long series of frauds and oppressions, was, at last, brought to nearly the lowest degree of degradation; and which, without an animating cause of some kind or other, must soon have been as vile a race

as that which disgraces the human form in Naples, Hanover, Russia, or Portugal. Thanks to our own energies, the Kingdom has been rescued from this last and greatest of all national calamities. We have not yet obtained the possession of our rights; but, we have proclaimed and demanded them; and, if our enemies are, for the present, too strong for us, we have the consolation to reflect, that theirs is the strength of unlawful violence, and that, all their frauds, plots and spies being now exposed, the duration of that strength must finally depend solely upon those who wield the bayonet, while we know, and while our enemies tremblingly feel, that the bayonet is wielded by our sons and our brothers; by those who love us and who hate them from the bottom of their hearts.

Leaving the tax-eaters and Borough-mongers to chew the cud upon this their situation, I propose, in this letter, to offer the public, through an address to you, some remarks on the motion, made by SIR FRANCIS BURDETT, towards the close of the last session of Parliament, on the subject of *Reform*: to which I shall add; if I have room, an observation or two on the *new source of consolation*, which Corruption appears to have discovered, in the prospect of *cheap corn*!

On the first of these subjects I have, in my letters to my friends, GOLDSMITH and HINXMAN, anticipated myself in some degree. But, it is a subject of such vast importance, that, if I repeat a little, that importance will be more than a sufficient apology. Indeed, repetition upon a subject of this nature, requires no more a apology than is required for a repetition

of the forms of Prayer and Thanksgiving, used by those Reverend persons, who lead us in the path of salvation.

SIR FRANCIS'S motion was, it appears, for a *Committee* of the Honourable House. And, what was this Committee to do? What was to be the object of its labours? Why, forsooth, "to inquire into the state of the representation of the people in that House." Good God! And, did the mighty spirit of our champion dwindle down into this at last! To inquire into the state of a thing, which state (in repetition which had echoed through every cottage in the Kingdom), had been declared to be "*as notorious as the sun at noon day!*" All the petitions had declared this; SIR FRANCIS himself had asserted it a thousand times over; nay, it had been declared, within the walls of the House itself, and by those, too, who were enemies of Reform, that the trafficking in seats was as notorious as the sun at noon day, and the Speaker had declared, that, at such bold and unblushing Corruption, "*our forefathers would have startled with horror.*" And, yet, after all this, SIR FRANCIS wanted inquiry, and that, too, by the House, or "*Room,*" itself, in order to ascertain, whether a Reform were just and necessary! After this let us not laugh at any philosopher, who may call an assembly of the learned together to inquire, whether there be a sun or a moon; let us not laugh at any judge, who may request a jury of notorious thieves to be impannelled, in order to satisfy his mind, whether there be such a thing existing in the world as theft.

It is hardly necessary to remind you, sir, that, for more than twenty years, SIR FRANCIS BURDETT, has been asserting, that the House of Commons did not, in any rational sense, represent any part of the people, that he has frequently assert-

ed, that it was *improper* to call it the House of Commons; that he, at the Palace-Yard Meetings, called it "*the Room over the way;*" that in the paper for which he was sent to the Tower, he called it, in the malediction of Scripture; "*thou whited wall;*" that he frequently asserted openly, that it was *unworthy of being petitioned* by the people; that he saw no ground of hope, other than in the people's own exertions. All this is well known to you, and equally well known to his enlightened constituents; and, after all this, repeatedly, dinning into the people's ears, for nearly a quarter of a century, he comes to that very Room, at a moment when it had accomplished the ruin, which he had so often predicted, and tamely asks it to inquire, whether it be quite so perfectly the representative of the people as might be wished; and he thus puts it to the vote of the "*Room*" itself, not *whether it will do the people justice*, but whether the people have *any ground to complain of injustice!*

I have here, however, referred to *speeches* of SIR FRANCIS, and these may have been misrepresented. I could easily prove, that, as to the particulars mentioned, they have not; but, let us take one of the many documents, sent forth under his *own hand*; and, I select his letter to the Citizens of Westminster, written from RAMSBURY, at a time when he had been apprized of an intended Meeting of his constituents to petition against the continuance of the *property tax*; and which letter was in the following words:

Ramsbury Manor, Decr. 29, 1814.

Gentlemen, I am much disappointed at being prevented, by a heavy fall of snow, attending the Meeting of the Electors of Westminster, advertised for the 29 of December.

I regret this the more, because, I per-

ceive, by the wording of the advertisement, that a large and enlightened view of the subject is intended to be taken; one worthy of the City in which this Meeting is to be held; not narrowed to the consideration only of an oppressive Tax, but enlarged to a general view of that whole system of Taxation, every stroke of which, like the cat-o'-nine-tails from the backs of our soldiers, brings blood; and which is not more galling in the mode and severity of its collection, than in its profligate, corrupt, and wasteful expenditure. In fact, the Income or Property Tax has no title to that pre-eminence in infamy, it appears in public detestation to possess, nor is it a whit more arbitrary in its execution, cruel in its operation, or ruinous in its consequences, or unconstitutional in its principles, than the Excise, or many other summary, arbitrary, and unconstitutional jurisdictions, established by act of Parliament, and rooting out the common law of the land; that law which my Lord COKE truly says is the best inheritance of the subject. Besides the torture of our Soldiers, I might add the brutal horrors of the impress, the inhospitable and tyrannical act against foreigners, with a long string of *et-ceteras*, too numerous to insert here, and too palpable to be denied.

The enlightened and patriotic Electors of Westminster, know full well, that these are only a few of the bitter fruits of that baleful tree, which nourisheth its roots in that hot bed of corruption from whence it sprung, St. Stephen's Chapel; and though it has struck deep in that consecrated soil, we are instructed by the highest authority how to judge it, and by the same authority how to deal with it.

That we may be able to deal with it accordingly, before the whole property of the country is absorbed by the Government, before the nation is plunged into

fresh wars against human liberty, and before the system of dragooning introduced during the last, is irremovably established, is the fervent prayer of, Gentlemen, your ever grateful, sincere, and attached Servant,

F. BURDETT.

As a mere Grammarian, and to guard against the cavilling of pedants, I will just observe, that Sir Francis has been careless here, in a little point or two, as to the quality of strict correctness; but, a piece of writing more pregnant with interesting matter, more judicious in its selection of topics, more abundant and just in manly sentiments, those sentiments more forcibly and more happily expressed; in short, a piece of writing more eloquent and better calculated to produce the desired effect, never, as far as my observation has gone, dropped from the pen of man; and, at the time, I observed, in the Register as well as in conversation, that the letter amply compensated for the effects of the *fall of snow*. This letter, written in his solitude at RAMSBURY, and, I am sure, without any study and without the taking of a copy or the making of a correction, affords the fair means for us to judge of the mind and talents of its author; and this letter alone will serve as a complete answer to all those, who have been led to believe, that SIR FRANCIS BURDETT is not a man of great judgment and ability. Fifty times have I read this letter, and, at every reading, with additional admiration. How different is this sort of eloquence from the far-fetched, affected, feeble trash of Canning. Here is more said, more food for the mind is presented, in the space of half a page, than this babbler would put forth in the space of a bulky volume.

But, Sir, I wish SIR FRANCIS had, in the last year that has passed, kept in mind another parable of that same Gospel, to which he here so aptly refers, and of

which he makes such admirable use. That other parable would have admonished him, that it is not the *possession*, but the *employment*, of *talents*, which is the main thing to be looked to.

Coming now to the application of this letter to our present purpose, let me ask, whether a motion for *enquiry* was all that the people had a right to expect from one, who had, under his own hand, declared the House of Commons to be a "*baleful tree*", and had told the people, that it ought to be "*hewn down and cast into the fire*"? Was a motion for *enquiry* all that the people had a right to look for from such a man? Either it was unjust so to describe the House of Commons. It was *sedition* so to describe it; or, it was to fall far short of duty, if not to betray his trust, to *appeal* to that same House, whether it stood in need of Reform or whether it did not. And, after calling the House the "*baleful tree*," after telling the people, that the Scripture had *taught them how to deal with it*; after "*fervently praying*" that they would be able *so to deal with it*: After all this, what can be said in justification of SIR FRANCIS'S conduct in sitting *silent*, while the people were abused as *wild projectors*, as *mad projectors*, as *violent* and *ignorant* men; though they had none of them proposed to *hew down* any thing? Nay, what is more a great deal than tacit abandonment, he joined with, and highly praised Mr. BROUGHAM, the RUSSELLS, Mr. BRAND, and many others, by whom his own followers had been, and daily were, abused! At the Westminster dinner, too, it was the Boroughmongers and sons of Boroughmongers, who were the theme of his praise. He could not be *deceived*. He could not hope to *convert* these men. He could not hope to change the nature of these limbs of the "*baleful tree*." Oh, no! He was too wise to hope for any

such effect. And, therefore, we must ascribe this total change of sentiment and of conduct to a *change in his views*.

The passage in his letter, inserted above, which speaks of the "DRA-GOONING system," is now become as unhappy, as it then was happy. What would the Citizens of Westminster have said, if, at the close of the reading of that letter to them, some one had risen and said: "Take care, Gentlemen, how you *rely upon these fine sentiments, which, though they flow freely upon paper, will never, when the pinch comes, be the rule of action*; and, I can assure you that the son of this very SIR FRANCIS will become literally a *dragoon commander in time of peace*, when the openly avowed object of the army shall be to prevent the people from obtaining a Reform; and, as if to render the thing as flagrant and odious as possible, this son shall serve in a regiment of dragoons commanded, in direct violation of all law, by a FOREIGNER; and, moreover, SIR FRANCIS shall himself go and nurse him in a Royal Barrack at Brighton, and, during his convalescence, shall Hunt with the Prince's Hounds, and reside in the house of one of the court Aids-de-Camps?" What would the Citizens of Westminster have said, if such words had, upon the occasion here stated, been uttered? They would have regarded the speaker as the vilest of calumniators; and, perhaps, their indignation might have urged them to commit some act of violence on his person.

After this letter was it not a little too much to hear the writer assuming a tone of *extreme moderation*, and talk eternally about *relying upon the Gentlemen* of the country? But, this was nothing compared with his abandonment of the people at the opening of the Session; and even this was less odious than his subsequent

applause of the Whigs, whom he had so long been teaching the people to consider them as being full as bad as their opponents by describing the whole together by the emphatical term, *the Regiment*.

In my letters to Messrs. GOLDSMITH and HINXMAN, I have fairly traced all his conduct to his real motives : and, long before his *motion* was made, the Ministers saw, if he did not, that his schemes had failed, and that he was become of no real consequence. Seeing this they treated him and his motion with the most perfect contempt. They *kept away from the House*, and left him *to be answered by a mere underling*. So that the *long harangue*, which had been threatened for *four months*, though full of learning and good sense, appeared at the close of the debate (if it might be so called) perfectly ridiculous. The Ministers well knew, that nobody but himself felt any interest in the fate of the motion ; and, indeed, that he only wanted to make a grand display. The Reformers, who had heard of these motions for enquiry for thirty years, wanted a *Bill* to be moved for, in order that their claims might stand clearly and fairly upon record. They despised the motion for enquiry. This the Ministers well knew ; and, SIR FRANCIS now found, that, though the people could be something without him, he, without the people, was nothing. This was precisely what Mr. HUNT had said at the Meeting of Delegates in London ; and, it would have been well, if it had been taken as a friendly warning instead of being taken, as it appears to have been, as a sort of threat. I thought Mr. HUNT urged this unnecessarily, and I told him so. But, he was right ; and, indeed, it would have been much better, if Mr. HUNT's opinions, as to SIR FRANCIS, had been adopted and acted upon at a much earlier period. His suspicions were first awakened by SIR FRANCIS's conduct towards *you*, during

your struggle in Berkshire. He well knew your character, your principles, and your talents ; but, here, as every where else, accursed *envy* did the mischief. From the time that SIR FRANCIS went to Brighton, Mr. HUNT had no hope of his remaining firm ; and, though he expressed himself in doubts rather than in positive opinions, he was only rendered more explicit by SIR FRANCIS's refusal to present the Spa-fields petition. Upon that occasion Mr. HUNT yielded to my advice, or, rather, to my *intreaties*, to keep the thing as quiet as possible ; but, he did it with very great reluctance, against his own judgment, and in the face of reasons, which I was unable to answer. He said : " You may try, as long as you please, to keep him up to the mark ; but, you will not succeed. You must, in the end, quit him, or quit the people ; and so must the Major. It is useless to tell me that your breaking with him will throw the Reformers into confusion. They had better be thrown into confusion *now* than at a later period. We shall know what to trust to, if you speak out *now* ; but, if the people be led along in deception, 'till the Parliament meet, you will see, that they will have been put into his hands only to be abandoned. Let me" added he, " go down to him, and" (squeezing almost to dust a letter he had just received from SIR FRANCIS) " I warrant you I'll soon bring the matter to a point !" I told him, that, when the good of our country was concerned, personal feeling ought to have no weight ; that, though he might think himself and the Meeting grossly insulted, the only question with him ought to be, whether, by an open quarrel with SIR FRANCIS, he should do good or harm to the cause of the people ; that, as to his own character, as personal feeling must be seen to exist, the world would be apt to attribute his quar-

rel to that cause, rather than to a sense of public duty ; and that, as there were ten thousand bitter tongues and base pens all busily at work against him, I was afraid, that the worst side of the picture would be oftenest seen. He yielded, as I said before, to my intreaties rather than my arguments ; and, I afterwards had solely to regret the power of those intreaties. If he had gone down to BRIGHTON and brought the whole of the question about *son* and all before the public, we should have been armed beforehand. The defection of our champion would have been proclaimed. We should have had nobody to defend us against the calumnies of our screened foes ; but, the nation would not have been deceived ; and our guilt, as seditious wretches, would not have been *inferred*, as it was, from the total silence of our professed defender and supporter. There would have been no *prattle* for us ; “ *damning with faint praise* ;” and we should have been disencumbered of the load of responsibility for that defender’s follies, which follies (for a wise man may have them) formed no small part of the subjects of the Report intended to form the ground, as they did form the ground, of the gagging and Imprisonment Bills. There sat he hearing us accused of what we had never done, and of what he had done, and saying not one word in his own defence, lest, at the same time he should be suspected of an endeavour to defend us. The MEETING OF DELEGATES itself was not of *our* calling. *He himself signed a circular paper*, by which they were called together ; and, he called them together, too, *to discuss the provisions of a BILL*. I always protested against any such Meeting, and so did Mr. HUNT, and I remember showing to *you*, in October last, a letter which I sent off the same day, containing my opinions upon this

subject. When the *Delegates* came, we thought it best to meet them, which we did, and we so managed the matter as to prevent any disagreeable circumstances to arise from the Meeting. Yet not a word did SIR FRANCIS say in defence of this abused Meeting, though his own brother attended at it. This, too, he suffered to be lumped amongst OUR “ *wild projects*,” and to be represented as *seditious* by his new friends ! The great respect which I have for his talents, and for his kindness of heart, when unperverted by unjustifiable ambition, restrains me from affixing the suitable epithet to this conduct.

It is very clear, that, if we had come to an open rupture with SIR FRANCIS in the month of November, our cause would have come unloaded with any of those circumstances, which afforded a plausible handle to our adversaries. If you look into the gagging and imprisonment Reports, you will find them studded with *Spenceans*, *Union Clubs*, *Hampden Clubs*, and *Meetings of Delegates*. The Spenceans all the world saw we had nothing to do with. The Union Clubs we soon proved never to have had an existence, except in *prospectus*. But, the same could not be said of the *Hampden Clubs* and the *Meeting of Delegates*. And these were of SIR FRANCIS’S creation ! It was he who had, under his own hand, called the Meeting of Delegates, and it was he, who, under his own hand, had sent a *missionary* (and a very faithful and clever man he was) through a part of England and Wales to promote the formation of Hampden Clubs ! So far was I from having ever participated in any Club work, I had always most strenuously protested against every part of it ; and I state this in an address to you with the more confidence, as I am sure you will recollect, that, in a letter of mine to Sir FRANCIS BURDETT,

written in October last, I most earnestly besought him to get rid, as quickly as possible, of all such entanglement, giving it as my decided opinion, that such combinations, while they might possibly do great harm, could by no possibility do good. Therefore, if, taking the line recommended by Mr. HUNT, we had come to an open rupture with SIR FRANCIS in November, away would have gone all his *Hampden Clubs* and all his *Meetings of Delegates*. The "two-penny trash publications" would soon have convinced the people, that these combinations must be injurious to their cause. We should have had meetings in the open air, and, as I always recommended, no agent, no deputy, no delegate, no palpable marks for despotism to hit at. The spirit that was on foot was at once so strong and so insinuating that it found its way, as the Doctor said (while he gaped and stared) "not only into every *hamlet*, my Lords, "but into every *hovel*!" and down came his quire of notes upon the table, as if he had been smiting with his leaden lump one of those devoted little pamphlets. Unencumbered with these Clubs and Delegates, we could have defied the father of lies himself to find out a charge against us. Besides, we should have then *taken the lead*; and I leave you to guess what would have been the effect, throughout the kingdom, of such a Meeting as we had in Hampshire and of *such a Petition* as we sent from that Meeting, if that Meeting had been held in *December* instead of *February*! Instead of acting, I was always *waiting* to know what SIR FRANCIS meant to do. I was waiting for his son's recovery, then for the father's return from fox-hunting. And I had the half of my time taken up in endeavours to make others wait with patience. Instead of this, I ought to have gone first into Hampshire, and then, as my Lord

Cochrane knows, I proposed to go into Worcestershire and downwards into Lancashire and thence through Derbyshire into Yorkshire, and back through Nottinghamshire and Norfolk and Suffolk. This was my wish. I wished to see the state of the country with my own eyes and to send up a Register from every county. I would have formed no *Clubs* I'll warrant you; but, I would have seen and heard the people, and I would have set the thousands of spies at defiance. I had, early in December, actually written home to my eldest daughter to bespeak her for a travelling companion, when, all at once, after long expectation, Sir Francis was, I thought, actually coming to Town. Another and another and another delay arose; then, when he did come, there was *no decision*. The chopping and shifting backward and forward put me in mind of the old army—saying about SIR HARRY CLINTON, who so frequently ordered and countermanded and ordered again and countermanded again, that the soldiers, in their uncourtly style, said of him, that, if, by any misfortune, he should go into a *place* with *two holes*, the consequences must be very disagreeable before he would be able to make his election.

This *indecision*, in SIR FRANCIS, though a little too much belonging to his character, did not arise from a want of knowing what ought to be done; but, from a want of a disposition to do it, and from a reluctance, an absolute shame, not perhaps, wholly unmixed with fear, to refuse to do it. Thus was I kept penned up in the smoke of London, dinned by the hackney coaches by day and by the swearing of watchmen and the squalling of their female prey by night, instead of breathing the sweet air, and conversing with zealous and active men in several parts of the country. This was pretty much the case with several other per-

sons as well as myself; and thus did SIR FRANCIS keep in an almost neutralized state, men, not of more talent than himself (for he has as much as any man) but of forty times his energy and industry.

As I said before, the shabby, the paltry fear of seeing others equal to himself in point of popularity was the main cause of all this mischief; and, it was not now, that this fear, as I observed before, showed itself for the first time. An instance of the effect of this predominant feeling just now occurs to me, which did not occur to me upon a former occasion. In 1812, I think it was. It was in 1810, 1811, or 1812, but it is not very material which. At this time a vacancy for one of the seats for the City of Coventry took place. The people of Coventry, anxious to put in a Member, who might act with SIR FRANCIS, wrote to the *Westminster Committee* to recommend them a proper person. This COMMITTEE had managed the election of SIR FRANCIS, had received Subscriptions for that purpose, and had thus got into a correspondence with almost every considerable town in the kingdom. Perhaps I shall hereafter have to speak pretty fully of the use which this Committee have made of the power thus obtained. For our present purpose, it is sufficient to say, that they had obtained throughout the country, a great reputation for public spirit and for political information. To them, therefore, some patriotic men of Coventry made the above-mentioned application. The Committee, astounded, as they well might be, at the fearful consequence, to which to their utter surprize, they had arisen, applied to SIR FRANCIS to know *whom* they ought to recommend, Sir Francis, on his part, seems to have been taken equally by surprize, and to have been in great distress to find out a *suitable representative* for the public spirited men of

Coventry. He well knew Mr. HUNT, indeed, and Mr. WALKER, and he knew also MAJOR CARTWRIGHT. He knew many, many other men of great talent and of tried political integrity; he knew many men, either of whom was fully his equal in every public and private virtue, and who surpassed him in industry, though, perhaps, not in good wishes for the cause of Reform. But, some how, or other, the names of none of these men appear to have occurred to him upon this occasion; and after a good while taken for thinking upon so important a matter, who in all the world should he think of but a COLONEL MAINE, who was, I believe, in some regiment of *Guards*, and who used to be a sort of table-companion at Mr. HORNE TOOKE's: but whose name I had never before heard of. This gentlemen, who must have been charmed at the novelty of the unexpected honours, which had thus, as from the clouds, fallen upon him, set off, by a stage-coach, to take possession of them and add them to his military decorations. But, as envious fate would have it, the Colonel, owing, perhaps, to his over-haste, or to the confusion of ideas, which is apt enough to be produced by the sudden acquisition of greatness, and which confusion the country people call a *flustration*, got into a *wrong* stage-coach, and, his *flustration* having been succeeded by a *profound sleep*, to the soundness and duration of which something taken to compose his fluttered nerves had, probably contributed, was awaked by the coachman about mid-night at a town, the name of which I have forgotten, about as distant from Coventry as was the spot whence the Colonel had started twenty hours before. Fatal nap! The election was held next day in the forenoon. BUTTERWORTH, the London Bookseller, happend to be at Coventry, and, in the true spirit of that pi-

ous charity, for which he is so famous, seeing a seat going a begging, kindly extended his embraces towards it. From the same feeling he has cherished it very carefully ever since, and he has not failed to avail himself of it to do all the mischief that his small talents will enable him to the "*sedition and blasphemous friends of Reform.*"

Now, Sir, is it possible to account, upon any ground favourable to SIR FRANCIS, for his conduct upon this occasion? Would not one have naturally supposed, that he, who had hardly any man to second one of his motions in the House of Commons, and who was continually and most justly complaining of this; would not one have naturally thought, that he would have seized with delight this opportunity to placing on the bench with him some man of talents, on whose integrity and industry he could depend? Could he find no such man amongst all the Reformers? What a libel upon them is the bare supposition! What a libel, too, upon his own judgment! For, if he could find no such man amongst them all, what a scandal was it to him to live amidst such a circle of political associates!

The bare supposition that he could find no such man amongst all the numerous persons, with whom he conversed on political matters, whose conduct he very frequently applauded, and with whom, indeed, he very frequently *consulted* as to the steps that he himself should take, nay, of the assistance of whose zeal and industry he did not always disdain to refuse to avail himself; if he could find amongst all these persons no man worthy of sitting upon the same bench with himself, no man more worthy than Colonel MAINE in that particular respect, then indeed, did his associating with those persons amount to a most disgraceful proof of his

own want of taste and want of judgment. But this was not the case. If there had been no other person worthy of the proffered seat there was MAJOR CARTWRIGHT. Did he require, in order to render the selected person worthy of being his associate; did he require in such person a profound knowledge of all the principles of the Constitution and a minute acquaintance with the laws of the land and the laws of Parliament; did he require consummate talent in the statement of facts, joined with the dearest reasoning and the most powerful mode of applying those facts, whether in writing or in speaking; did he require industry such as never, in any other instance in the world, perhaps, marked the character of man; did he require integrity proved by forty years pursuit of the public good, to the sacrifice of private interest, without one single deviating step during the whole forty years; did he, demanding more than nature permitted him to demand, require the zeal and the vigour of youth joined to the wisdom and stability of age; did he require still more, did he insist upon having the highest degree of resolution and ardour joined with the utmost gentleness and tenderness of disposition; did he require an associate, who, never in the whole course of his life had said a word which he had to unsay, and whose private character was as completely without stain or spot as is the snow which has just fallen upon the highest hill. To have required all this would have been unreasonable; it would have been arrogant; it would have been insolent to the last degree; but, if he had required it all, *he had it all* in MAJOR CARTWRIGHT, whom himself, in one of his well chosen expressions emphatically called the "*true hearted Englishman.*" Nay, I have heard he himself say, that it was no small honour

to any man to be the countryman of MAJOR CARTWRIGHT. And, how came he then to forget Major Cartwright, when he recommended COLONEL MAINE?

But Sir, thus you will find it all through. The great cause of all the mischief is, his unconquerable dislike to see other men approaching to equality with himself in point of popularity. Hence it is that he surrounds himself with a set of army people, a set of shallow brained, loose talking men who say what they do not think, and who know that they shall go unpunished on account of their insignificance. They flatter SIR FRANCIS; they worry him not to make exertion. He sees that they can be nothing, and he endures their society, because it relieves him from all apprehension of meeting with a rival. I have often thought that the beautiful, the perfectly matchless passage in POPE, with regard to ADDISON, would apply with equal justice to SIR FRANCIS BURDETT, only in the latter case the consequences are much more mischievous than they could possibly be in the former.

If it be asked why the story of COLONEL MAINE be brought out *now* after having been suffered to remain in oblivion so long. The answer is obvious: that in this case, as in every other case in life, we overlook one thing, two things, three things, four things, and, at last, when the fifth or the tenth or something comes we rip up the whole; and that this is just and necessary in all the walks in life, every man must have been told by daily experience. A trifling act of oppression does not justify a people in coming to a rupture with their government; but let there be many of these acts and let them go on rising in magnitude as they rise in number; and then the whole from the first to the last are fairly urged to make up the mass of charge against that government.

Thus it has been in the case of SIR FRANCIS. There were several little things which none of us liked. No man on earth could have a greater respect for another than I had for him. It was founded in reason. On my conviction of his great talents; of his great power to serve the country and of his ardent desire to do it. But, there were several occasions, when to you, as well as to several other persons, I expressed my sorrow at the existence of the very disposition, which has at last produced the absolute necessity of open and undisguised complaint. It is in this way which we conduct ourselves with regard to the faults of our nearest and dearest relations. We weep but yet we accuse. And, surely, SIR FRANCIS has not to expect at our hands a greater degree of tenderness than that which we exercise towards our own flesh and blood.

It has given me extreme pain to perform this part of my duty. I shall be happy, indeed, again to see in SIR FRANCIS BURDETT the man to whom above all others we may look with confidence; but, at any rate, it is much better to see in him even an open enemy than to place on him a false reliance. What I have written respecting him I have sent to be published to his face. The moment I am upon the same footing with him; that is to say, the moment the laws will protect my person from arbitrary imprisonment, as it now protects his person; that moment I am ready to go, and verbally say to his face that which I have now said by the means of the press. In a letter which I intend before long to address to the citizens of Westminster I shall lay before them some facts as to the manner in which they have been treated; and I certainly shall urge them to bethink themselves in time as to the line of conduct they ought to pursue in order to pre-

vent themselves from being made to be of no more real consequence than the wretched inhabitants of a rotten borough. I have a very strong suspicion that Mr. BROUGHAM, or the intriguing SIR ROBERT WILSON or some such *lead-captain*, is intended to be palmed upon them at the next election. I see that SIR ROBERT WILSON has been wriggling himself into the town of MAIDSTONE, where he has been spouting away some high sounding words without a meaning. Such a man as this can talk as much sedition as he pleases, secured as he knows he is, by his insignificance in the eyes of the government. But, the question to put, not only to these flashy blades, but to SIR FRANCIS BURDETT himself now is: "Will you, if you be elected a Member of Parliament, move for leave to bring in a Bill, for a Reform of that Parliament upon the principles of annual elections, and a right of voting in such a manner that every man, who has attained the age of twenty one years, including soldiers and sailors, shall have a vote?" This is the question to put to the flashy gentlemen and to SIR FRANCIS himself; and, if they do not answer distinctly in the affirmative, it is an act of baseness, and of treason to the country, in any man to give them his vote. However, as to this matter, I shall express myself more fully hereafter; and, as my space is fast diminishing, I shall now hasten to the second subject of my letter.

The consolation which corruption is now endeavouring to derive from the "*bountiful harvest*," and from the consequent low price of corn, would, under almost any other circumstances, be a suitable subject for merriment; but, while she is laying about her and cutting such gashes in our flesh during her antic gesticulations, we are induced to do all we can to repress our inclination to laugh.

In the Courier newspaper of the twenty-third of July the following curious paragraph appears: "That the manufacturing market has materially improved, and is gradually improving, is an obvious and *most gratifying fact*; and we are assured that the woollen, the iron, and the lace manufacturers are again in *the fullest employ*. The abundance of *the products of the earth*, in every quarter, will engender a demand for the productions of ingenious industry. When *provisions are easily provided*, the remainder of the earnings, *even of the poor*, will be applied in the purchase of manufactured comforts, and requisite clothing. For these things the Continent looks chiefly to England; which, of course, in her commercial and manufacturing interests *participates in continental prosperity*. The home trade will also revive, from the same cause; for an *abundant harvest will enable the agricultural labourers* to give employment to thousands of their fellow subjects, whose looms were motionless, and anvils silent, *during the high price of provisions*, when the demands of hunger, left little for comfort, and nothing for the gratification of the laudable wish to gain a step in society, by the use of better furniture, or more decent clothing."

As to the facts stated here, relative to the flourishing state of the Manufactures, they are, I dare say, nearly, if not wholly, false. This is one of those attempts to prop up the system by delusion, which attempts have been in practice for so many years. But it is not with facts; it is with the reasonings of this paragraph, that it is my present intention to deal. We are here told, that national prosperity arises from *cheapness* of provisions; and that the miseries of the country have been occasioned by the *dearness* of provisions.

This is now the language of Corruption! How she changes her tone! How she lies backward and forward like an old baggage of a bawd; or like her own spies and informers! Let us cross-examine the hag; Let us hunt her out through all her shiftings and windings, and expose her, first to be kicked and buffeted, and then to be laughed at. Let us carp the old bawd; and let the mud and rotten eggs fly at her head.

Now then, Sir, the Nation well recollects that its miseries first began to assume their present appearance upon the *fall of the price of produce*. The Nation well recollects that this fall began in 1814; that it continued on into 1815, that the price became still lower in 1816; and that at every fall the misery increased. Corruption, alarmed at the consequences of the ruin of Landlords and Farmers, and at the enormous increase of the poor rates, all which had come *accompanied* by the low price of corn, took it into her old crazy noddle that *cheap corn was the cause of this misery*. I, as you well remember, told the hag that it was not the cheap corn that had produced the misery, but the *dear Paper*; and that this had been occasioned by the operations of the paper money fellows in London, who had been cherished by her, as witches are said to suckle the imps, who assist them in tormenting their neighbours. Nevertheless the old hag persevered in her notion, and she would have dear corn "*as a remedy*" for the distresses of the people; and you well remember, that one of the most bold, most impudent, most ignorant but most cruel of her imps, *congratulated the hag*, in the spring of 1816, upon the "*fair prospect* of a rise in the price of corn"! Yet now she is proclaiming that the high price of corn has been the ruin of those who have the misfortune to live under her extortioning grasp.

What! do we not recollect the dismal pictures, which Mr. Brand and several other members of Parliament, drew of the wretched state of the country, of jails full of Farmers; of workhouses full of paupers; of bands of starving wretches prowling throughout the country; of whole parishes deserted by the occupiers of the land? And do we not recollect, that all this was ascribed, to the unfortunate, the unhappy low price of corn? Can we forget the everlasting motions and the more than everlasting speeches and Pamphlets, of Mr. WESTERN and the whole tribe of sensible, clear-headed and profound "*agricultural Gentlemen*," all, yea all, ascribing the distresses of the country to the low price of corn. No; we cannot have forgotten, that a hundred and twenty-three correspondents, select correspondents of the wise *board of agriculture*, for the use of whose precious wisdom the people pay thousands a year; we cannot have forgotten that a hundred and twenty-three of these wonderfully enlightened gentry, recommended, as a *remedy* for the distresses of the country, to adopt measures of different sorts, all tending to *raise* the price of corn; that nineteen of them recommended even coercive measures for raising the price, and that two of them recommended to lessen the quantity of *land to be sown*. One recommended the cultivation of *hemp*, and this gentleman seems to have had a tolerably correct notion of the nature which the wants of the country would before long assume, for, if that article were but justly employed for about two months, the infamous hag of whom I have spoken above would no longer be able to produce the manifold miseries, under which the country now groans; and to insult, as she now does, the common sense of mankind by her madness and her follies.

If we could forget every thing else can

we possibly forget the Bill that was passed to raise the price of corn. Here was no speech; no motion; no Pamphlet. Here was a Law, passed for the avowed purpose of raising and keeping up the price of corn, and that, too, upon the express ground, that high priced corn was *necessary to the prosperity of the country!* And now, after all this Corruption has the impudence to tell us, that it is the high price of corn which has produced the misery, and that its returning to a low price, will produce prosperity! Amongst all the qualities, which this hag possesses, and which have been such a scourge to mankind, no one exceeds in degree her impudence; her unfeeling, her hardened, her unparalleled impudence. Were it not for this quality, she would be comparatively harmless; for without it, it would be impossible for her to hold up her head and to drive along through the dirt and the blood which sticks to every limb of her, and which has rendered her an object more worthy than any that ever existed of the horror of civilized man.

With all this, however, the hag, as is generally the case, is possessed of ignorance much about upon a level with her impudence, or she would perceive that she is overdoing the thing, when she is promising the return of general prosperity in consequence of an abundant harvest. Certainly an abundant harvest, cheap corn, cheap meat, are good things, generally speaking; because, to push the argument to an extreme, if there were no produce at all from the earth, all the people must starve and the nation must come to an end. But it requires a head much more clear and solid than Corruption has amongst her prating battalions to trace national prosperity back to their true causes, and to show whence national misery takes its first spring. If you, for instance, grow

five hundred quarters of corn this year, and sell them for no more than you sold two hundred and fifty quarters which I will suppose to have been the amount of your crop last year, it will require a little more profundity than any of the imps of corruption possess to show what additional means you will possess, in consequence of this abundant crop, either to purchase manufactures or to employ labourers. There needs no more than this one observation to blow the whole of Corruption's theory into the air, and to show that her hopes, from this cause, are as groundless as her designs and her actions are notoriously wicked. For my part, distant as I am from the scene, seeing nobody from England, having nothing but these newspapers wherefrom to draw my information, this very paragraph, which corruption has put forth in great staring letters, is quite sufficient to convince me, that she has no ground for hope; that she feels herself drawing towards death's door, and that, like the poor creatures in a consumption, she would fain persuade herself as well as the world, that she is better than she was, that she is recovering; that her complaint is going off; and that in a short time she should be pretty well again.

It is my conviction, at the same time that it is my never failing consolation, that the savage old hag will never recover; that she is doomed to perish at no distant day, and that you and I, and the nation at large will live to trample on her grave, in which will be interred along with her, all the symbols and all the instruments of her mischievous power. But, suppose, for argument sake, that the statements and opinions contained in this paragraph were as true and as wise and as consistent as they are false, foolish and contradictory, what a dilemma the gaggers and dungeon-

ers would find themselves in then ! They have ascribed the discontents of the people to the inflammatory writings and speeches of designing men, who took advantage of the distresses of the nation. Very well, gentlemen gaggers and dungeoners ! Those distresses, we shall say, are now at an end. We can no longer take advantage of the distresses of the nation. Unscrew your gags then if you please. Unlock, may it please you, my lords and gentlemen, the doors of your dungeons ! The distresses are no more ; consequently we cannot take advantage of them ; consequently we shall have nothing but our own fact and argument to lay before a happy people ; and as our fact and argument (unless you have been guilty of falsehood and calumny) are, of themselves, not worth a straw, the consequence must be that they will produce no impression, and that, even upon your own showing, your gags and your dungeons are unnecessary. This will be a curious dilemma for the gaggers and dungeoners to be placed in ; and, indeed, they are nearly placed in this dilemma already, if we are to regard them as believing what they say ; for they already talk of the *late* distresses, of the *late* want of employment, of the *late* delusion ; of the *late* calamities ; with what face then do they keep in force measures, which they vowed and declared, were intended merely to keep the people quiet till they were no longer blinded by the irritation of distress. No man ever did, I believe, hear, before, of gags and dungeons being employed to mitigate the evils arising from adverse seasons. It is quite a new sort of remedy. The old fashioned way was, to put up prayers for plenty, and to yield assistance to the poor from the hands of the rich. Bounties on importation of food ; premiums for the increase of its

quantity. These were the old fashioned means of endeavouring to counteract the evils arising from scarcity. But our tender hearted rulers scorn all these, and apply at once the dungeon and the gag. In order to compensate the people for the want of a belly full of food, they endeavour to silence their tongues and to close up their eyes ; and in order to comfort helpless wives and starving families, they shut up the husbands to pine out their lives in holes but little bigger than the graves, into which, probably, they are to go when they come out of their prison.

Such is the kind, such is the compassionate disposition, and such are the tender cares of the rulers of the people of England. But, as I observed to you in my last letter, they tremble while they oppress, and their violence is the effect of cowardice and not of courage.

Before I conclude, I cannot refrain from noticing the situation to which Mr. COKE of Norfolk has reduced himself. To do this has occurred to me during the foregoing observations ; and as what I shall say upon the subject belongs naturally enough to that which I have just been discussing, I trust, that I shall not be deemed chargeable with any thing like ill-nature for having upon this occasion introduced this Gentleman by name. You will not have forgotten, Sir, though many other persons may have forgotten, that, when Mr. WESTERN, Mr. COKE and other country gentlemen, who are really worthy of the name, were coming forward in Parliament with propositions for measures to raise the price of corn ; you will not have forgotten, that I took the very earliest opportunity of warning these gentlemen of their danger. I told them, that they should *let the Ministers alone to do the thing themselves*. I told them, that the Ministers wished the thing to be done, but

that they wished somebody else to do it; and that above all things they wished it to be done by such men as them; so that, after the bill was passed for raising the price of corn, the Ministers might throw all the odium of the bill upon the land owners. After several efforts to awaken these gentlemen to a sense of their danger, I addressed a letter to Mr. COKE upon the subject in the Register of the 28th of May, 1814. I dare say he thought me an impertinent fellow, and that his mighty whig friends together with his eulogist Mr. PERRY, would save him from that popular reproach, which I predicted would long be his lot. This gentleman would, however, have acted wisely if he had followed my advice, and of that he himself must now be sensible; for so completely have the corrupt friends of the Ministry availed themselves of his having called for the Corn Bill, that they have not only destroyed his political influence in his county, they have not only brought a shower of mud and addled eggs about his ears; they have not only caused him to be burnt in effigy by the hands of those who formerly almost adored him; they have not only done this, but they have reduced him to resort to the expedient of obtaining a *character*, as servants of suspicious honesty do; and to cause this *character* or *certificate of good behaviour*, to be circulated through the newspapers. It is in the following words; and I really shrug up my shoulders, and my features writhe as I am beginning to transcribe:

"At a meeting of the Gentry, &c. of the
 "Hundreds of Guiltcross and Shopham
 "held on the 15th inst. at East Harling
 "in Norfolk, the Earl of ALBEMARLE, in

the Chair, a series of Resolutions,
 "and an Address founded thereon, to Mr.
 "Coke, were voted unanimously. The
 "following is an extract. : *We have ever*
 "considered the Corn Bill as a measure
 "originating with the *Prince Regent's*
 "Ministers; and we are confirmed in our
 "opinion by the unequivocal declaration
 "of the First Lord of the Treasury, the
 "Earl of LIVERPOOL, in the debate on the
 "Habeas Corpus Suspension Act, in the
 "House of Lords, on the 1st of June.
 "We also know, that you have invariably
 "been favourable to a free, an unrestricted
 "market; and that it is uniformly
 "held as a general principle, in the
 "Norfolk Agricultural Society, of which
 "you are the President, that it would be
 "better for the farmer, for this country,
 "and for all nations, that there should be
 "no corn laws at all. We look upon the
 "improved system of Agriculture, 'origi-
 "nated, improved, and matured,' by your
 "exertions, as highly beneficial to all
 "classes of society. To the land-holder,
 "as enabling him, by the advanced value
 "of his estate, to meet the pressure of
 "times, and the increasing demands of
 "Government; to the Clergyman, as
 "creating a considerable additional reve-
 "nue, without any risk or exertion on his
 "part;—to the farmer, as affording a
 "more certain return for his labour and
 "capital;—to the poor, as employing a
 "greater number of hands in husbandry;
 "and to the community, as meeting the
 "growing population with growing pro-
 "ductiveness. We beg also to state a
 "fact which cannot be controverted; that
 "in those parishes where the improved
 "system of agriculture has been wholly,

"or even partially adopted, no want of employment has been experienced by the lower orders, nor have those to whom the management of the poor is intrusted been driven to such devices and expedients, for the creation of labour as have been found necessary in other places."

This, Sir, is a melancholy spectacle ! Little did Mr. Coke think that this would be the consequence of not having followed my advice. I cannot say that I pity him; for, he had great power, and he has never been cordially for a Reform of the Parliament. It is *not true*, as is here stated, that the measure of the Corn Bill *originated* with the Ministers. It originated with Mr. WESTERN and Mr. COKE; for they first broached the subject in Parliament, while the Ministers very cunningly let them fall into the trap, and seemed to be unconcerned; or, at least, *doubting*, spectators. My LORD ALBEMARLE and his associates of this certifying Meeting, do not say, indeed, that the Bill did ori-

ginate with the Ministers. They say that they have "*ever considered*" it as having originated with the Ministers; and that they are now confirmed in their "*opinion*." What do the people care about their opinion? The people remember the fact; and they will remember other facts, too, much longer than the Boroughmongers imagine. This certificate, Sir, of good behaviour is, take the whole thing into view, one of the lowest and most mean devices that ever man resorted to. But, as I said before, there is no pity due to the humbled party. He has relied upon a faction and not upon the people. He has employed his great power against the people's rights. At his humiliation, therefore, not a man of the people ought to repine.

In perfect health, and with the kindest wishes for your health and prosperity, I remain, from the bottom of my heart,

Your faithful friend,

and most obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

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